

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00

SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 SCS-03 MCT-01 DHA-02

AID-05 CCO-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSC-05

SP-02 OC-06 OPR-02 PA-01 USSS-00 PRS-01 SCA-01

A-01 OMB-01 SS-15 SY-05 TRSE-00 EB-08 /085 W

-----240942Z 100385 /15

O 240814Z APR 77 ZFF-6

FM AMCONSUL KARACHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1659

INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL LAHORE IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L KARACHI 1916

E. O. 11652: GDS

TGS: ASEC, PK, PINT

SUBJECT: SECURITY AND POLITICAL SITUATION IN KARACHI

1. SUMMARY: THE MARTIAL LAW ADMINISTRATOR HAS DIRECTED EMPLOYEES OF ESSENTIAL SERVICES TO REPORT TO WORK, AND HAS DECREED THAT SHOPS WILL BE OPEN DURING HOURS OF CURFEW RELAXATION. THE CURFEW IS BEING RELAXED APRIL 24 BETWEEN 0530 AND 0930 AND BETWEEN 1500 AND 1800. THERE WERE FEW CURFEW VIOLATIONS OR OTHER INCIDENTS IN KARACHI AND HYDERABAD APRIL 23, THOUGH ONE VIOLATOR WAS SHOT IN HYDERABAD. THE CURFEW HAS LED TO PROFITEERING BY SHOPKEEPERS IN KARACHI BUT SPOT SHORTAGES OF COMMODITIES ARE NOT YET SERIOUS. THERE IS SCATTERED SENTIMENT FOR EVACUATION IN THE FOREIGN COMMUNITY IN KARACHI, BUT MOST FOREIGN FAMILIES ARE STANDING FAST, IF NERVOUSLY. END SUMMARY.

2. IN INSTRUCTIONS ISSUED APRIL 23, THE KARACHI MARTIAL LAW ADMINISTRATOR DIRECTED THE EMPLOYEES OF ESSENTIAL SERVICES TO REPORT FOR DUTY (PRESUMABLY THE 25TH SINCE THE 24TH IS A SUNDAY). AT THE SAME TIME HE EXPANDED THE LIST OF ESSENTIAL SERVICES TO INCLUDE NOT ONLY
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UTILITIES AND THE POST OFFICE BUT ALSO THE PORT, SHIPYARD, RAILWAY, BANKS, HOSPITALS, CIVIL AVIATION SERVICES, PIA, CUSTOMS, PAKISTAN REFINERY, NATIONAL SHIPPING CORPORATION, ROAD TRANSPORT CORPORATION, FLOUR MILLING CORPORATION, CHEE CORPORATION, ETC. EMPLOYEES OF SUCH SERVICES ARE EXEMPTED FROM THE USUAL CURFEW RESTRICTIONS TO THE EXTENT OF BEING PERMITTED TO GO TO AND FROM WORK ON THE BASIS OF THEIR OCCUPATIONAL IDENTITY CARDS ALONE.

3. ALSO ON APRIL 23 THE MARTIAL LAW ADMINISTRATOR DIRECTED THAT SHOPS WOULD BE OPEN AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT WOULD OPERATE DURING THE HOURS OF CURFEW RELAXATION. THE CURFEW WAS RELAXED APRIL 23 BETWEEN 0700 AND 0900 AND BETWEEN 1600 AND 1800. (IN SENSITIVE AREAS SUCH AS LIAQUATADQD, NAZIMABAD AND GOLIMAR, THE CURFEW WAS LIFTED ONLY DURING THE SECOND OF THESE PERIODS.) TODAY, APRIL 24, THE CURFEW IS BEING RELAXED FROM 0530 TO 0930 AND FROM 1500 TO 1800 IN ALL OF KARACHI AND IN HYDERABAD.

4. AN OFFICIAL PRESS RELEASE PUBLISHED APRIL 24 STATED THAT THERE WERE NO "UNTOWARD INCIDENTS" IN KARACHI APRIL 23, BUT THAT IN HYDERABAD FIRING ON CURFEW VIOLATORS RESULTED IN ONE DEATH. A NEWS-MAN IN HYDERABAD CONFIRMED THE LATTER STORY IN A PHONE CALL TO ONE OF OUR LOCAL EMPLOYEES, AND STATED THAT APART FROM THAT INCIDENT HYDERABAD WAS QUIET. WE HAVE NO REPORTS OF SIGNIFICANT CURFEW VIOLATIONS IN KARACHI OR DEMONSTRATIONS IN RURAL SIND (WHERE THERE IS NEITHER CURFEW NOR MARTIAL LAW, THOUGH SECTION 144 HAS BEEN IMPOSED IN NAWABSHAH AND JACOBABAD) APRIL 23 OR 24, BUT IT IS BECOMING INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT TO GET INFORMATION SINCE THE GOP HAS ORDERED THAT THE HOME SECRETARY IN EACH PROVINCE MUST SCRUTINIZE ANY ITEM ON "CURRENT PNA AGITATION" PROPOSED FOR PUBLICATION. THE NEWSPAPERS OF APRIL 24 ARE SUDDENLY AND CONSPICUOUSLY SKIMPY IN COVERAGE OF PNA ACTIVITIES. THIS WILL BE A HANDICAP TO THE PNA, AS WILL THE BAN ON THE PARTY'S POSTERS AND LEAFLETS WHICH HAVE BEEN A VITAL MEANS OF COMMUNICATING INSTRUCTIONS TO PARTY WORKERS AND SUPPORTERS.

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5. DURING THE HOURS OF CURFEW RELAXATION THERE IS A HASTY SURGE OF SHOPPING BY KARACHIITES. SPOT SHORTAGES OF COMMODITIES ARE REPORTED, THOUGH THEY SEEM NOT BE SERIOUS YET AND THE MARTIAL LAW ADMINISTRATOR HAS IN MIND TRYING TO MAINTAIN SUPPLIES OF KEY COMMODITIES BY DECLARING THE FLOUR MILLS AND GHEE FACTORIES, FOR EXAMPLE, ESSENTIAL SERVICES. PROFITEERING IS RIFE, BUT THE AUTHORITIES ARE ATTEMPTING TO CHECK IT TO SOME DEGREE BY ASSIGNING ROVING OFFICIALS, INCLUDING ARMY PERSONNEL, TO CHECK PRICES.

6. AN AMERICAN BUSINESSMAN HERE HAS BEEN ADVISED BY HIS HEAD OFFICE IN HONG KONG TO CONSIDER EVACUATING HIS FAMILY. THIS SUGGESTION APPARENTLY WAS INSPIRED BY REPORTED STORIES IN THE HONG KONG PRESS OF A SUPPOSED EXODUS OF FOREIGNERS FROM KARACHI. THE BUSINESSMAN IN QUESTION TOLD HIS HONG KONG OFFICE THAT HE THINKS IT PREMATURE TO THINK OF EVACUATION. THIS IS THE PRESENT OPINION OF THE CONSULATE GENERAL ALSO, BUT WE ARE MONITORING THE SECURITY SITUATION CONTINUOUSLY AND WE ARE IN REGULAR CONSULTATION WITH KEY MEMBER OF THE AMERICAN COMMUNITY. A FEW AMERICAN FAMILIES ARE CONTEMPLATING

DEPARTURE, BUT THOSE OF WHO WE KNOW ARE PERSONS WHO WOULD BE GOING AWAY FOR THE SUMMER AT SOME POINT ANYWAY. THE GERMAN SCHOOL CLOSED ABOUT TWO WEEKS AGO FOR THE SUMMER, A MONTH EARLY BECAUSE OF THE UPSET CONDITIONS, AND SEVERAL GERMAN FAMILIES LEFT KARACHI. THE AMERICAN SCHOOL IS STILL OPEN, THOUGH MANY DAYS HAVE BEEN LOST DURING THE PAST TWO MONTHS AS A RESULT OF THE ELECTIONS, HARTALS AND CURFEWS.
MOORE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PROVINCE, SECURITY, POLITICAL SITUATION
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Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977KARACH01916
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770142-1181
Format: TEL
From: KARACHI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
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Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770425/aaaaavff.tel
Line Count: 124
Litigation Code IDs:
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Litigation History:
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Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
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Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
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Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
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Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2711718
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SECURITY AND POLITICAL SITUATION IN KARACHI
TAGS: PINT, ASEC, PK
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/db416a0-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009